AIR POUCH
PRIORITY

RESTRICTED
(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE
745h.00/3-2453

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

NEA
MESSAGE CENTER
1953 MAR 30 PM 3 48

FROM: AMCONGEN, Lagos, Nigeria DESP. NO. 219

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. DATE March 24, 1953

REF:

26 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.	REP EUR OLI E IFI IPS
no	REC'D MAR 30	INFO OTHER	COMM FRB TAR TR

SUBJECT: Fortnightly Newsletter - March 9 - 21, 1953

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEWED BY [illegible]
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☐
RELEASE DENIED ☐
E.O. or FOI EXEMPTIONS 3(1)

POLITICAL

House of Representatives in Third Week of Session

Mr. E. A. FELLOWES, First Clerk Assistant to the House of Commons, arrived March 11th to take over presidency House of Representatives. First week's president had been Mr. H. L. BRETT due delay Fellowes' arrival. Fellowes center of controversey last session due some of his rulings on debates, but general membership House welcomed him back for present session.

This budget session highlight presentation of estimates by Acting Financial Secretary, BAKER-BEALL. Presentation discussed below (ECONOMIC).

Hot debate ensued on estimates for Nigerian contribution to West African Frontier Force. NCNC members proposed cut of approximately half in protest against: failure turn over control Nigeria Regiment to (almost non-existent) African officers; lack of need Nigerian Army against outside aggression; failure establish West African officer school; and generally withholding complete control of Regiment from Africans. NCNC gathered support other elements as debate went on and forced a division. Tight combination votes of Government bench and all Northern members House roundly defeated East-West combination against budget item--army allocation not reduced. Northerners impressed by fact army used for maintenance internal order, outside danger met by British and Allied armies. Government pointed out excessive costs of West African officer school in relation to number of qualified candidates, and that number of positions for West African candidates at Sandhurst had been increased. Northerners evidently see army as important guard against possible violence provoked by rabid East and West political elements.

Attitude of majority membership House toward Zik elements' action in East demonstrated again Saturday, March 7th.

K. O. MBADIWE

RWRoss/LDJunior/JAJones:hz
REPORTER

RESTRICTED

ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

FILED
APR 17 1953

745H.00/3-2453

RP

This Document Must be Returned to

K. O. MBADIWE (Azikiwe faithful) rose to make accusations against Governor and Lt.-Governor (East) actions in East crisis ("far from responsible"). Government members walked from chamber followed by all but one of Northern members and twelve Zik men from East. President forced adjourn House by lack of quorum.

Obafemi AWOLOWO, Action Group leader, proposed to House that Regional Executive Councils be empowered dissolve regional legislatures and call for new elections. Young Representative M. E. OGON (NCNC) said his party willing have Eastern House dissolved as they confident they could re-win majority. However, Azikiwe's West African Pilot carried editorial next day condemning proposal.

No successful attacks yet made upon Government's budget. Budget debate to terminate during week of March 23-28.

Cameroons Bloc Warns NCNC

Signs of dissatisfaction within so-called Cameroons bloc, presently supporting NCNC in East, appeared last week. Influential House member from Cameroons, Mr. S. A. GEORGE, warned in letter to NCNC National Secretary that he and colleagues would have to reconsider pledge of support to NCNC as result party's action in East. Blamed precipitous action of Azikiwe for current deprivation Cameroons representation in Eastern Regional Executive Council (through resignation Cameroons minister) and strained relations with Northern Cameroons members House of Representatives--who remain part of solid Moslem North group. George said Cameroons bloc had been led subjugate interests of uniting North and South Cameroons and, ultimately, French Cameroons to purely party interests of NCNC. Azikiwe group replied George viewpoint not representativesof Cameroons representatives. Too soon to tell just how much support George has but would appear his view held by majority. NCNC early promised Cameroons to work for unification and this main reason they joined with NCNC.

ECONOMIC

Budget for '53-'54 Fiscal Year (April 1 to March 31) Presented to House

Acting Financial Secretary BAKER-BEALL presented House with draft Budget reflecting Nigerian Economic slowdown. £47½m proposed expenditure (including £3.2m abnormal contribution to Loan Development Fund) exceeds 52-53 by only £5½m. Estimated income of £45½m exceeds approved 52-53 Estimate by just under £3m. Resulting estimated surplus for 53-54 of £323,040 is £217,910 less than estimated surplus for 52-53.

BAKER-BEALL

Baker-Beall stressed in adage-studded speech that last seven "fat years" resulted from no-longer-existent abnormal conditions and warned against likelihood of "slimming" process for entire Nigerian economy. Budget, though slightly increased over last year, represents retrenching process in view of decline in world prices of raw commodities, principal source of Nigerian revenue. Visible trade surplus 46-51 averaged £20m yearly but dropped in 1952 to just £4m. In addition probable import-duties revenue drop of £1m must be retrieved; balanced budget possible only through increase of textile import duty rates; slim surplus accomplished only by increase of import duties on alcoholic spirits and wearing apparel.

Budget contains special one-time grant to Regions for 53-54 only to meet shortages in regional income from tobacco duties which had been over-estimated; provides for increased salaries for teachers and government employees (items budgeted for in 52-53 only by Supplementary Appropriations) and for increased Nigerian contribution to maintenance of West African military forces.

Produce Sales Tax Passed

Central House levies by vote of 78-13 one year tax on produce sold to Marketing Boards (peanuts, palm oil and kernels, cocoa and cotton). Marketing boards to hand over tax proceeds deducted from farmer's proceeds at time of sale to Regional Government of place of sale for regional use only. Bill result of "prayers" of North and West Houses; similar petition deferred in East House.

Another Bank Goes Down.

Latest Bank to go into "voluntary liquidation" subsequent to last year's Banking ordinance requiring higher standards is the West African Bank of Yaba, Lagos.

Minister of Transport Announces Twelve More Locomotives for Nigeria This Year

Chief Bode THOMAS, Central Minister, informed House that Britain had delivered total of 132 locomotives to Nigeria since 1945 and that 12 more would be delivered by December 1953. Also stated possibility diverting engines destined for Iran to Nigeria due present Anglo-Iranian difficulties. Said evacuation of peanuts from Kano had increased in past year from 23,000 long tons monthly to 42,000.

Minister also announced plan train six young Nigerians as civil air pilots in UK.

Twenty-five

RESTRICTED
(Classification)

Twenty-five Per Cent Electricity Rate Increase

Electricity Corporation of Nigeria announces increased rates effective March 1, 1953. Reasons given as unprofitable operations to date, necessity for large investments in new equipment and desire lower rates in some presently very high rate areas.

Plan to Establish Rubber Plantation in West

Western Regional Production Development Board announces plan establish 4,000 acre rubber plantation in Benin Province. Trees may be planed by end of 1953.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Local Press Reaction in re Stalin's Death

Initial Nigerian press reaction took line, almost unanimously, world has lost great leader. He eulogized as great fighter for "subject people" despite Western opinion his policies. Action Group's Daily Service and Nigerian Tribune later ran interpretive Reuters and other UK articles telling of ruthless suppression of peasants and nationalist minorities, purges, etc. Editorial opinion, generally, reveals unquestioning sympathy and support anyone who will publicly declare against "imperialism." No local recognition Communist fishing in troubled waters British Empire. Poor education and lack of ability and ethical standards lead many Nigerian editors to play up to general tendency of literate Nigerians to support anyone or anything opposed to British.

Erwin P. Keeler
American Consul General